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THE THIRD VOLUME
OF
THE CENSUS OF 1881
AND
ITS CRITICS.

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The third volume of the Census of 1881, which contains the result of the laborious and intricate inquest on the material conditions of Canada, is the subject of attacks from some newspapers. I have thought it my duty, both in the public interest and in justice to the officers connected with the work, especially the Chief Compiler, Mr. Layton, who have to my knowledge, honestly, diligently and intelligently accomplished their arduous task, to show the fallacies and the unfairness of these attacks.

It should not be necessary, but, it seems, nevertheless, opportune to remark that absolute accuracy is never to be expected from such a labour as a census, no matter when, no matter where, and no matter by whom it is executed. It is a false notion to compare the operation of such inquiries to the work of book-keeping and of balancing commercial or financial accounts. To impugn the results of a census and question its immense usefulness, because errors of details are detected in it, is just as absurd and mischievous as would be an assault on the whole machinery of postal or customs service, because a certain number of letters get astray and certain inaccuracies are found in reports. Nothing human is unfailing, and errors will occur do what you may to guard against them: the more or less perfection is the more or less avoidance of such occurrences.

Men at all acquainted with the subject will not take notice of such errors, apparent or real, unless they materially affect the general results of the investigation; they know that when the returns give 32,350,269 bushels of wheat it means about 32,000,000, and that such errors or inaccuracies of details, whether they are of enumeration, of compilation, of posting or printing, some being overrating and others of under-rating, generally balance each other: the only question is to see if they are not such as to notably influence the grand result and its proportionate deductions.

With these few preliminary remarks, I shall at once take up the points which have been made the subject of the attacks I propose examining.

The Relation between Numbers of Dwellings and Houses owned.

In table I of the first volume is given the number of separate dwellings subdivided into five categories, namely: vessels, shanties, inhabited houses, uninhabited houses, and houses in construction, situated in each district; in table XXI of the third volume are given the number of houses owned by the inhabitants of each district. The critics assume that the results of these two separate and quite distinct informations should exactly correspond, and on such extraordinary assumption attack the accuracy of the Census, because in the Census returns the figures representing these two results do not correspond.

The fact of the matter is that if these figures were in precise correspondence it would be proof that they had been "cooked" and made, by a dishonest process, false and erroneous, for otherwise they cannot agree, being of different nature and purpose.

First, it is self evident that vessels afloat, shanties, tents, and wigwams of nomads are not houses owned, although they are dwellings; second, that houses owned by non-resident persons or companies are not to be included in the number of houses owned in Canada, although they are Canadian dwellings: this at once makes the number of houses owned smaller than the number of dwellings by many thousands. The error of the critics, in this instance, is such that they have dwelt on the fact that in the Territories there are only 1,242 houses owned by Canadians for 11,652 occupied; when the Census shows that 9,357 of these dwellings are not houses, but the lodges of nomadic populations.

But there is another reason which influences the difference in a much greater ratio, coming from the fact that many, a great many, houses built and owned as one immovable property form two or more separate dwellings or abodes. By instruction, the enumerators were thus ordered in regard to dwellings to be entered in table I: "A separate house is to be counted wherever the entrance from the outside is separate." No such thing in relation to table XXI, where are entered as one property, one house owned, any such real estate which is by the proprietor thereof considered one building of human abode, no matter that it does oftentimes comprise two separate dwellings or inhabited houses with separate entrance, under the same roof.

Hence, when the Census gives (1881) 753,017 occupied dwellings it includes 116 vessels, and 14,692 shanties, tents or wigwams: when it gives 738,209 houses as dwellings occupied, and only 712,440 owned, it is not only *prima facie* correct, but it also conveys the information, worth having, that there were in 1881 about 25,000 houses with double separate dwellings.

There is, on this point, no apparent error, and none to be suspected. Therefore, when the critic, on the face of these figures, exclaims: "It is one of those things, we fancy, that no fella can understand," it only shows that he, the critic, has failed to understand a very simple thing.

The amount of tonnage owned by Canadians in the Census does not agree with the tonnage registered in accordance with the "Merchant Shipping Acts."

It would be a matter for more than ordinary astonishment if they did, for the two things are of different nature, and form no possible criterion of separate or comparative accuracy.

One might just as well make the addition of all the births registered in a country for the last thirty years, and say:—that is the present population of that country.

It is with shipping as it is with other kinds of property: the total of acres on the maps, of houses on the valuation lists, of tons of shipping on the register books, are no correct indication of the number of acres, of houses and of tonnage owned by the inhabitants of Canada, to the exclusion of non-residents at any given moment.

In regard to shipping, the mere transfer of registration from a Canadian port to another British port, outside of Canada, and the keeping, on the registers, of hundreds of vessels which have ceased to exist, but the disappearance of which has not been reported, alters the totals of tonnage to a comparatively very large ratio, at the same time that the first may not alter a unit in the tonnage owned in Canada and that the second diminishes it to the extent of its disappearance. Extensive sales to non-Canadians also necessarily alter the figure of *tonnage owned* in Canada, but not necessarily the *tonnage registered*.

A broad fact is that the amount of tonnage owned by inhabitants of Canada is, *every year*, increased by many thousands of tons, and the Census shows an increase of 253,583 tons during the decenniad comprised between the years 1871 and 1881, in the four older provinces. There is no such rule applicable to the register books, on account of transfers of registration and the erasing on the ascertaining of disappearance. It is in this way that between the years 1878 and 1880, when the *Canadian ownership* was experiencing a large increase, the *registration* shows a considerable decrease in tonnage: the registered figures are, 1,333,015 for the year 1878, 1,332,094 for the year 1879, and 1,311,218 for the year 1880.

But whether or not the registration contains the records of those facts and those fluctuations to which ships are submitted as regards ownership, and in particular *Canadian ownership*, such portion of the registers which concerns them is not compiled and is not tabulated in the Reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, which purely and simply gives the addition of tonnage registered in Canada, no matter if they are in a greater or lesser proportion owned by inhabitants of Canada.

All this looks so plain, that the wonder to me is that it could escape the understanding of any one. The Marine returns convey one sort of information, and the Census returns another sort of information; they cannot take the place of each other, cannot be tested one by the other, and they cannot agree, unless it be a mere and not to be expected coincidence. The only relation they bear, one towards the other, is that they belong to cognate subjects.

The Changes which have taken place between the Two Censuses in the Ownership of Lands in Districts.

Of course, changes in the acreage of lands owned by the inhabitants of each district are continual ; if such were not constantly taking place it would show a total stagnation in land transactions, in a country where several millions of acres of wild lands are owned by individuals, and where millions over millions of Crown lands are for sale ; and when the two censuses show that, the private ownership of lands in Canada has actually undergone, between the years 1871 and 1881, an increase of several millions of acres.

What astonishes these critics especially is, that in several districts the acreage owned is less in 1881 than in 1871, and very considerably so for few districts. But the figures of the Census are simply the expression of facts, of which reasoning alone demonstrates the necessary existence. It is precisely in such districts where the largest ownership of wild lands was formerly existing that immense reduction of acreage owned must take place. Why? Simply from changes in residence of owners or of limits of districts, and because these lands were to be sold—were actually, to a large amount, sold to inhabitants of other districts. The City of Quebec had 2,632,874 acres of lands owned in 1871, and only 588,117 in 1881 ; but the County of Quebec, which encircles the city, had only 363,727 acres owned in 1871, and as much as 1,078,005 in 1881. A simple change of residence of large owners from the limits of the city to the surrounding district explains the vastness of the change, so far as the figures go, and when by inquiring you learn that hundreds of thousands of acres of wild lands, owned by Quebec inhabitants, have been sold to inhabitants of other districts, such as vast tracts situated in Anticosti, in the Eastern Townships, in the seigniories of Beaupré, Fossambault, and in many other places, the wonder vanishes away.

There are other changes which are due to another cause, in addition to those mentioned, from the fact that the readjustment of electoral districts, following the Census of 1871, has made many census districts materially different in 1881 from what they were in 1871, in extent of territory, population, and in every other respect.

Therefore, again, it is not the Census which on this point is caught in “extravagances of falsehood, &c., &c.,” but the critics.

The same remarks apply to village lots, houses, warehouses, shops and vessels ; this is so self-evident that it would be almost an insult to the intelligence of the reader to insist on it, and follow that manner of criticising through its vagaries.

The Excess of Acres of Land Occupied Over the Area in Few Districts.

The reason and meaning of that is explained in the introduction to the third volume, where it is said : “The exceptions are, when residents of cities and towns occupy and work lands situated outside the limits,

"thereof, and upon which no person resides. It occasionally happens "in villages and old settled townships that a part of the holding extends "beyond the limits of the village or of the township." It is very simple; the acres occupied are made to follow the person of their occupants and are registered in the same district, irrespective of the municipal limits; this occurs where there are commons, pleasure grounds and farms occupied by companies or inhabitants of a district, especially if it is of small area. It is for the same reason that products are registered in districts out of which they were got. Codfish and furs, for instance, registered in a district situate at a great distance from waters where codfish is caught, and forests where such furs are to be got: it simply means that these articles were entered where alone the information could be procured, without possibility of attributing them to any other specific district. The only alternative was to take them there or omit them from the reports; great care was taken not to run the risk of duplicating them: it is a question, not of figures, but of the way in which to proceed under peculiar circumstances.

Besides all that, it should not be lost sight of that the areas given in volume first are from geographical measurement, when the areas carried in the third volume of land occupied are furnished, one by one, by the proprietors themselves; hence to suppose that under any or whatever circumstances these figures should precisely correspond would be a piece of rare *naiveté* to say the least.

Therefore the error, fallacy, or whatever name be given to it is not chargeable to the Census, but to those who assault it.

There are Industries not at all Mentioned in some Districts.

Of course there are in very many instances, as a matter of fact, districts in which many industries do not exist. The critics, not taking notice of that, besides, are making a confusion between a manufacture and a shop, between the industries by which a substance is made to change its form and the commercial operation by which products are sold. In other instances industries do not appear under a specific name for the reason explained in the introduction to the third volume, in the following words: "The division of labour is "not so minute here as in older and more populous communities, and so "we find establishments grouped together, as *carding and shingle mills*, "*grist and carding mill*, &c., &c. It was found impossible to separate "one from the other, but they have been presented under the heading "to which the parties appear to attach the greatest importance." This is plain and reasonable, and was printed before any remark was ventured, from the outside, on the subject.

It is in following this groundless point of criticism that a local paper remarked, with indignation, that there were no stave mills credited to the County of Lambton. The fact is that the sawing and splitting of staves in this county, as in many others, is mixed with the

two connex industries entered as a whole under the titles of saw mills or cooperage, and a proof that the industry of stave making has not been overlooked, as regards the County of Lambton, lies in the fact that the said county is credited in the products of forests with 1,741,000 staves.

If a demonstration was wanted, *per contra*, of the errors in which the assaulters of the Census have fallen, we could find it in the commentaries of that paper on the stave industry. The critic says:—"The stave industry is one of the largest in the country, and employs safely 1,000 men."

The fact is that the making of staves, instead of being one of the largest, is, *per se*, one of the smallest among the important industries of the country, and that 1,000 men, exclusively employed, the whole year at stave making alone, could glut our home and foreign stave markets for several years. If the writer means, by stave industry, to combine the lumbering of the raw material and the cooper's work applied to the manufacture of staves into barrels, tubs, &c., &c., he is far short of the mark with 1,000 men; but if he means simply stave making he is much above the mark, being grossly in error anyhow; a state of affairs he would have mended for himself and his readers if, instead of unjustly attacking the Census, he had industriously studied it.

The variance between the number of hands and the wages paid for identical or similar industries in different districts.

As a matter of fact there exists differences on these points for various districts compared with others, and, of course, and correctly, the Census returns contain the expression of these differences. But there is an explanation which applies to many cases in which the difference is very large, and this explanation is given in the introduction to the third volume in the following words:—

"It may be remarked that in many establishments the workmen are not regularly employed, nor during the whole year." Thence the difference between the aggregate of wages, and of work done, as compared with the number of hands employed.

But I admit that errors are to be found in the Census on that point in a few instances; they, however, do not materially influence the aggregate results. A few of these are errors of enumeration, the parties being careless in furnishing the correct information, and a few errors which have escaped the attention of the proof-readers.

There are districts credited with products they do not furnish, and others not credited with products the raw materials of which they do possess.

Of course there are districts which manufacture some of their raw materials ; many manufacture the raw materials of other districts, and even of foreign countries, and many do not manufacture their own or any other materials at all, except in common trades. But let us quote one of the critics, for example, on this complicated question ; he says :—
 “ The County of Jacques Cartier produced 150,000 cubic feet of square white pine, though no one can tell where it grew, while the Counties of Kamouraska, L’Islet, Montmagay, Bellechasse, Beauce, Stanstead, Brome, Huntingdon, Beauharnois, Montmorency, Joliette, Laval and Hochelaga did not produce 1,200 feet of square pine of any sort “ among them all.” These critics are not severe on themselves. It is in this way that they give the production of that list of counties as being less than actually found in the Census ; but this is a venial sin and not worth mentioning, except as example of want of *scrupulous* exactitude when bitterly criticising the work of others.

The explanation of the above-mentioned *data* is as simple as it is easy. The figures of the Census mean that a quantity of square pine has been registered in Jacques Cartier, because it was worked in Jacques Cartier, and found impossible to attribute it to any specific district of production. The other mentioned districts can be distributed into two categories—one comprising those which have produced no square pine for consumption or export and have not squared any of an unknown origin ; the other category is composed of such districts as choose to turn their pine into boards and deals, instead of making it into squared timber. Here again, therefore, it is not the Census, but the critics, who are at fault, for not knowing and refusing to be informed of the intricacies of subjects and the state of the country as regards production and other peculiar circumstances.

The little Village of Shawville, in Pontiac, is returned as a large producer of grain, &c., &c.

The explanation of that case, represented as positively desperate, is nevertheless neither very intricate nor difficult of comprehension. The Township of Clarendon was divided into two subdistricts, *e* being Clarendon South, or Shawville, as often times mentioned under the name of this village, and *f*, Clarendon North. The consistent figures seen in all the Census tables, as relate to this sub-district, do at once indicate, to any intelligent and honestly disposed reader of the Census, that they cannot apply to a small village. A clerical error was made in writing down the name of this subdistrict : it should have been *Shawville and South Clarendon* ; but this is not a question of figures or result, it is a simple and trifling question of copying.

Crops are short of average in some sub-districts.

This piece of criticism can hardly be excelled in point of silliness and puerility. Certainly there are localities where some or several crops were short, and in few instances very short of a common average. Therefore, the work of the critics was an easy one to pick up a certain number of sub-districts out of a total number of 2,137, in which few, some or several of the crops are returned as smaller or far short of the average, and to represent it as an error in every case. They do not take for granted that a shortness of crops, sometimes amounting to almost a failure, does virtually take place. They appear not to understand that an average is an artificial figure made up of means drawn from actual numbers, a portion of which must be below and a portion above, and for some elements much below or much above the said average. For them, on the contrary, an average is a kind of bed of Procrustes, to which precise length everything must be cut, if too long, or stretched if too short. Among the cases picked there may have been some errors of enumeration, but the total amount of them, if errors there be, forms an insignificant portion of the general result.

In regard to the wheat crop, 47 sub-districts are mentioned, in 43 of which a small crop is returned, in 3 of which the shortness amounts almost to a failure, and for one of which an apparent extravagantly large figure is printed in the volume. As regards the 46, nobody can tell really whether there are or are not positive errors, and to what they amount, if any. One is an error of printing; but I am inclined to think that there are few real errors in the lot, but, I repeat, when immersed in the grand totals, they become imperceptible.

As far as the one error in excess is concerned, it is worth quoting, to show the futility of the animadverting remarks to which such an important work as the Census of the country is subjected, at the hands of some people. It refers to sub-district K, the village of Lucknow, in district 175, North Huron, in which *twelve acres* of land sown in wheat, be it well understood, *twelve acres* are made to have produced 243 bushels of wheat. An error of printing has occurred making it *one* acre; error, however, which is corrected in the *errata* at the beginning of the volume. Such an error would at once appear to be of such trifling general consequence that no critic, having the slightest respect for his reputation, would think of mentioning it. Besides, it is so evidently not an error of system, procedure, direction, enumeration or compilation, being simply one of posting or printing, and of such an infinitesimal import, that its mention in a criticism is ridiculous: when given as was done, separate from the context and surroundings, it becomes indicative of malice aforethought.

The potato crop is made the subject of a like criticism in relation to 20 sub-districts; there may be, in the lot, few, very few errors, but for most of them I have no doubt that the figures of the Census are the expression of actual facts; the potato crop in several localities, owing to the Colorado beetle and other causes, having been reduced to one-half and one-third of a common average.

The same remarks apply to the cases of the 35 sub-districts selected as being erroneously enumerated, because the hay crop in these locali-

ties is returned at one-half or one-third of the general average. One of these 35 cases is one of apparent, extravagant exaggeration, precisely of a similartype as the case mentioned in regard to the wheat crop: sub-district h, Village of Les Cèdres, District 74, Soulanges, with 25 acres, be it remarked *twenty-five* acres, is credited with 2,825 tons of hay instead of 23, an error coming from the fact that the hay crop was reported at 2,825 bundles, which should have been reduced into tons, as was done for all other such returns. This error is one of those escapes of attention very apt to be committed in such a multiplicity of details, but which, after all, is only a drop when diluted in the total. The wonder is that no more of such errors have been found, after a diligent and earnest search for them by ill-disposed critics, through the intricacies of the hundreds of columns, the thousands of lines and the myriads of figures contained in the Census.

In a few districts the number of occupiers of lands is less in 1881 than it was in 1871.

The critics have discovered that in 8 districts the occupiers of lands are, to a small extent, fewer in number according to the last Census than they were represented to be by the Census before last; on making that very marvellous discovery one of them exclaims:—"Who is to be held responsible for these discrepancies—Providence, the Exodus or 'the compiler'?" The answer is, there being no discrepancy between figures which cannot, by any possibility, be exactly the same, it follows that there is no responsibility to attach anywhere. This diminution in the number of occupiers simply means that there had been transactions by which some holdings have been added to others, giving in such cases one occupier, where there were two in 1871. Farmers sell to their neighbours or somebody else in their districts their holdings, to go and settle in other districts or in the west; it stands to reason that such transactions lessen the number of occupiers in the district where they take place, without injury to any one in particular nor to the country as a whole; nay to the marked advantage oftentimes to all concerned.

The Acreage of Lands Occupied in some Districts is given in 1881 as Smaller than it was in 1871.

In this instance there would be a real discrepancy if it were in regard to information which could be expected to be mathematically exact and to agree; but on the least reflection any person would immediately perceive that such accuracy or agreement is an impossibility. How can you expect that thousands of farmers could, at ten years interval of time, and when a change of persons has taken place in many cases, give the enumerators the mathematically correct area of their holdings? The idea is preposterous. Out of the 34 districts inscribed on the list of the critics there are more than one-third of which the difference is not worth mentioning, one of them being so

small as thirty-five acres for the district! I am inclined to think, for some of them, that there are errors of enumeration, although no one can say whether they belong to one census or the other. Where alone these errors, if errors there are, influence to any appreciable extent the provincial totals is in New Brunswick, and there the result of the influence amounts to less than *five-tenths of one* in one hundred acres; which, I repeat, may be again divided between the two census returns.

But apart from these reasonable explanations, which apply to all ordinary circumstances, there is for some districts, in this instance, the special reason that, by the electoral readjustment of 1872, the limits and extents of districts have been altered, creating new districts at the expense of others, and altering the conditions of many more.

The acreage of land improved in a few Districts is smaller in the Census of 1881, as compared with the Census of 1871.

The same explanation that is given in the next preceding paragraph applies to the present one; and, moreover, several of the 14 districts inscribed in the category are city districts, or districts where village, urban or suburban population has increased, and in which, consequently, many acres must have been transferred, from the class of improved farm lands, into the class of village or town lots. It is in this way that *twenty-one acres* less of improved farm lands in Halifax and *twenty-four* in Toronto are more than easily accounted for, these two cities being among the districts picked up by the critics for their reproofs on this point.

The Area of Pasturage is less in several Districts than was reported in 1871.

This is after all, perhaps, the masterpiece of the sort of criticism which has been indulged in. Inasmuch as in Canada the improved lands not under some crops or in gardens and orchards are resorted to as pasturage for a good part of the summer season, if not for the whole season, the Canadian farmers report in pasturage all the improved area which is not reported by them under some other heading: so the column headed pasturage in the Census is filled with the arithmetical balance of land improved not otherwise accounted for. Therefore there cannot be noticed any error in this column separately taken, unless it be an error of addition, and of such there have been none discovered. A diminution in the acreage of pasturage means simply a corresponding increase in the land under crop. As a matter of fact, the *proportionate* area of pasturage must have undergone a certain diminution on account of the progress in the final clearing of land, and, in several districts, of the greater resort to stall feeding, as compared with grazing, which has characterised our live stock operations for several years past, in certain portions of our territory; and the result of such alteration in our agri-

cultural pursuits is shown in the general returns of the Census, where it is seen that, while the total area in acres of the pasture lands have increased between the years 1871 and 1881 in the four older provinces of the Dominion by 17 per cent., the total area of improved lands has reached an increase of 20 per cent. Another proof that every known broad fact, in regard to the material conditions of the country, is accurately substantiated by the general results of the Census; and when the grand results have attained such degree of exactitude which can be expected, from the nature of things, the details cannot be wrong, as a rule.

These critics, the work of whom I have briefly reviewed in what they represent as the most egregious blunders, these critics, who evidently would be delighted if the Census was really badly executed, these critics have virtually brought forward a most emphatic proof of the practical accuracy and reliability of the Census they have assailed.

After such a diligent search, animated by such a craving for errors, to have come to such a failure as to pick up few, very few errors, indeed, or possible errors of no general consequence, and an array of supposed errors of the Census which, in reality, are blunders on the part of the critics themselves, is certainly a result well calculated to please those who have had something to do with such a vast undertaking, and to enhance public confidence in one of our most important state documents.

J. C. Taché.

OTTAWA, 19th June, 1883.